

SITUATION REPORT NO. 9
INCIDENT NO. 2004-021
DATE: May 6, 2004 Time: 4:30 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: **Spring Flooding** induced by heavy rains on frozen ground and ice-packed drains, streams and rivers.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No deaths or injuries have been reported.
3. DAMAGES: Formal Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA) conducted by FEMA, State Water Commission (SWC), and local officials showed approximate damage totaling \$4.9 million to public infrastructure. The PDA indicated the most severe impacts were to utility and transportation infrastructure. Agricultural interests, personal property, and public health and safety were also impacted by the event.

As of today, the National Weather Service (NWS) reported that the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) gauge on Devils Lake at Creel Bay registered a record high stage of 1,448.27 feet. This exceeds the record stage set on August 9, 2001 for the modern era, which dates back to the mid 1800s, during which much of the infrastructure around the Devils Lake Basin has existed. This closed-basin lake has experienced disastrous flooding since 1993. The heavy rain and runoff has now flowed into the drainage system and has reached its peak flows. Therefore, according to NWS officials, the amount of water that will still be flowing into Devils Lake from this event is fairly well known. By early June, there is a 50 percent probability that levels will reach 1,448.9 feet. Stump Lake has risen 2.8 feet since the end of March. This is due to a combination of local runoff from the late March rainfall and the approximate 25 cfs flow currently in the Jerusalem Channel. Based on the NWS 50 percent probability for the weekly chance of exceedance for Devils Lake, the SWC has estimated Stump Lake will rise to an elevation of 1,425 feet by mid-October as a result of flow from Devils Lake. As always, any large rain events will cause even greater rises.

Over the past two years, fluctuations in the lake levels have not been as dramatic as in the past. However, it now appears to have reversed this brief trend and will continue to exceed an elevation not seen in recent history.

Damage to infrastructure and property within the basin will continue to mount over the next several weeks as floodwaters continue to make their way to Devils Lake and Stump Lake.

Ramsey County:

On May 3, 2004, Ramsey County Emergency Management officials forwarded a situation report to the N.D. Division of Emergency Management reporting erosion of the Devils Lake area shoreline and sewer system problems due to flooding. A second situation report identified flooded roadways, threatened homes, utilities and dikes in housing sub-divisions. Ramsey County officials estimate that each one-foot rise of Devils Lake from current levels could result in \$20 million in damages.

On May 4, 2004, Ramsey County Emergency Management officials submitted a disaster declaration citing infrastructure and economic damages, as well as threats to health and public safety.

4. **RESOURCES:**

LOCAL: Ramsey County Emergency Management, County Commission, Creel Township Public Works, Devils Lake City Public Works.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. **VOLUNTEER ACTION:** No change from previous reports.

6. **MAJOR ACTIONS:** On May 5, 2004, Governor John Hoeven received notification that President Bush had approved North Dakota's request for a Presidential Disaster Declaration. The declaration designates ten North Dakota counties and one Indian reservation as meeting federal requirements to obtain federal funds for recovery from damages incurred during flooding that began on March 26. Counties and tribal lands included in the Presidential Disaster Declaration are: Benson, Cavalier, Grand Forks, Griggs, Nelson, Pembina, Ramsey, Steele, Traill, Walsh and the Spirit Lake Nation. The disaster declaration will open access to the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant and Public Assistance programs. It will provide federal grants to local governments, covering 75 percent of the cost incurred by damages to public property. State and local governments must absorb the remaining 25 percent.

In an attempt to provide an additional tool to assist recovery efforts, FEMA Region VIII has proposed an initiative intended to address situations involving long term isolation due to road flooding as well as possible inundation caused by the rising lake levels. Under the proposal, Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation (PDM) program and National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) funding may be applied to recovery activities, in addition to FEMA's Public Assistance (PA Infrastructure) program. FEMA officials have identified the following key components of the proposal:

- A focus on potential public health and safety impacts if the lake level continues to rise.
- Provisions for state and local officials to refocus federal money on acquiring properties prone to repeated flooding.

- Provisions for state and local officials to avoid paying, in some cases, several times the value of a property to simply maintain access to it during high water events.
- Share technical information and work with other stakeholders to develop the most effective way of managing the flooding situation in Devils Lake.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No changes from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No changes from previous reports.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

Douglas C. Friez, State Director